

SUBJECT: Communicable Diseases	NUMBER: 1-28.02
EFFECTIVE DATE:	REVIEW DATE:
NMMLEPSC STANDARDS: PER.10.01	APPROVED: Sheriff

I. PURPOSE

Law Enforcement works in environments that provide inherently unpredictable situations. Therefore Law enforcement officers may face the risk of exposure to blood during the conduct of their duties. For example, at the crime scene or during processing of suspects, law enforcement officers may encounter blood-contaminated hypodermic needles or weapons or be called upon to assist with body removal. Deputies similarly may be required to search prisoners or their cells for hypodermic needles or weapons or subdue violent and combative inmates.

The following section presents information for reducing the risk of acquiring HIV and HBV infection by law enforcement officers as a consequence of carrying out their duties. However, there is an extremely diverse range of potential situations which may occur in the control of persons with unpredictable, violent or psychotic behavior. Therefore, informed judgment of the individual deputy is paramount when unusual circumstances or events arise. These recommendations should serve as an adjunct to rational decision making in those situations where specific guidelines do not exist, particularly where immediate action is required to preserve life or prevent significant injury.

II. RULES AND REGULATIONS

- A. Infectious disease or communicable disease is one that can be transmitted from person to person or from an infected animal or the environment to a person.
- B. Blood is the single most important source of HIV, HBV and other blood-borne pathogens in the occupational setting, and preventing transmission must focus on blood and other body fluids containing visible blood. Precautions apply to semen, pleural, peritoneal, pericardial, urine, feces and amniotic fluid.
- C. When working in an environment in which body fluids are known to be present, the measure of protection will be barriers of protective clothing and universal precautions.
- D. Protective clothing consists of gloves, boots, goggles and face masks. Goggles and face masks are to be used only in environments in which body fluids become aerosolized or splattering is likely to occur.
- E. Work environments include but are not limited to sewers, open sewers, bathrooms, rendering first aid and CPR, and assisting the public.

- F. Hands and other skin surfaces shall be washed immediately and thoroughly if contaminated with blood or other body fluids or after having been in contaminated areas.
- G. Needles and sharp instruments should not be recapped. Do not remove used needles from syringes. Do not bend, break or otherwise manipulate any needle. Place syringe and needle combinations and other sharp items in puncture-resistant containers for proper disposal.
- H. Body fluid spills should be hosed down a drain or wiped up and cleaned with a disinfectant solution when wearing the proper protective equipment.
- I. Agency personnel may come into contact with a communicable disease when responding to batteries, performing CPR, during searches, assisting medical personnel and other circumstances.
- J. Agency personnel should use precautions in situations where they may come into contact with communicable diseases. Precautions may include gloves, face mask, or protective suit.
- K. The Undersheriff is responsible for the communicable disease program.
- L. Reporting exposure
 - 1. Agency personnel shall notify a supervisor as soon as practical.
 - 2. Ensure that a first line injury report is completed, documenting the time and nature of exposure. Deputies should also document the incident in an incident report.
- E. Personnel shall attend a training session coordinated by the professional standards office as required on the prevention and spread of infectious diseases.
- M. Exposure to a communicable disease through contact with blood or potentially infectious body fluids through the following methods:
 - 1. Needle sticks.
 - 2. Contact of blood or blood-contaminated body fluids with chapped or non-intact skin, open wounds or mucous membranes.
 - 3. Saliva in a human bite.
- N. Medical treatment
 - 1. Immediately wash the affected area with soap or a decontaminating solution.
 - 2. Consult the proper medical authority for assessment, counseling and preventive treatment as appropriate.
 - 3. Some types of exposure, for example human bites, require attention to prevent other types of infection.
- O. Records keeping

1. The employer shall establish and maintain an accurate record for each employee.
2. The employer shall assure that employee medical records are kept confidential and are not disclosed or reported to any person within or outside the work place.
3. The employer shall maintain this record for at least the duration of employment plus 30 years in accordance with "29 CFR 1910.20, Access to Employee Exposure and Medical Records."